

Governors Innovation Committee (CVEP) letter Attached

Patty Clouser [Patty@cvep.com]

Sent: Monday, September 15, 2014 2:48 PM
To: Innovation Awards (CA DOF)
Cc: Sheila Thornton [sheila@cvep.com]; Thomas Flavin [Thomas@cvep.com]
Attachments: Signed letter to Governors~1.pdf (1005 KB)

Sending hard copy in the mail today.

Regards

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September 15, 2014

Governors Innovation Award Committee
California Department of Finance
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

VIA EMAIL: innovationawards@dof.ca.gov

RE: INTERSEGMENTAL, CROSS-SECTOR APPROACH TO COLLEGE COMPLETION GOALS

Dear Committee:

On behalf of the membership of the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, we are encouraged by the committee's work to establish strong criteria for the Governor's Innovation Award application. This is an unprecedented opportunity for our state. Of the criteria that you ultimately require, we advocate that regional and inter-segmental linkages between education and business be a core focus of the award.

We believe setting unified, cross-sector, regional goals and systems of mutual accountability provides the necessary "glue" for efficient use of resources, innovative thinking to remove long-standing bottlenecks in educational pathways and a community mandate for improvement in key college completion indicators.

We encourage you to incentivize innovative linkages between segments of education to achieve true seamlessness. The K-12 and higher education systems need better alignment to affect improvements in areas such as early college credit and degree attainment, common definitions and metrics for college readiness, proactive remediation occurring more frequently at the K-12 level instead of first year of college and mutual accountability for progress toward degree.

Aligning efforts toward a common return – the economy

In the Coachella Valley, 40% of our adult population is Hispanic and yet only 6% of Hispanics hold a bachelor's degree or higher (compared to 24% of the entire adult population). Unemployment rates for residents with high school graduation or less are at 19% vs 7% for residents with a bachelor's degree or higher. This disparity poses a significant threat to our students, their families and our community's overall economic well being. These low levels of college attainment have had a direct negative effect on both career prospects for our lowest income students and overall workforce quality.



For this reason, the region's education and business leaders have taken action. We see college attainment as a poverty reduction strategy and an essential component of our efforts to build a thriving economy. Our region is pursuing an ambitious initiative to reverse the trend of low educational attainment and to begin to build a top-quality workforce for the jobs of the future.

Under the collectively adopted *Coachella Valley Regional Plan for College and Career Readiness*, three K-12 school districts, the county education and workforce agencies, higher education institutions and hundreds of business partners have joined forces in a five-year effort to assure all students are prepared for college and career. This includes assuring students have the financial aid and scholarships necessary to enroll in college and complete a high-quality degree aligned with priority business sectors.

Prioritize linkages between education systems, alignment with business and economic development targets

Our region has dedicated the past eight years to building this unified approach to college and career readiness. As a result, it is exceedingly clear that setting the "glue" between and among education, business and community efforts to assure aligned and unified strategies and regional accountability is essential. While school districts and higher education institutions have made progress internally, strengthening the linkages between them is now our highest priority.

The impact of a collective and aligned approach is demonstrated in the Coachella Valley by the following:

- The region has increased the number of high school career academies (a proven college readiness strategy) from 5 to 18, serving more than 850 in 2005 and 2750 students in 2013. This comprises 50% of all career academies in Riverside County. Graduation rates for this group of students is 98%; self-reported college going rates are 89%
- Regional FAFSA completion rates increased from 50% in 2013 to 64% in 2014
- Since 2009, CVEP and 22 matching partner agencies have awarded scholarships to 1,200 low-income students, totaling \$9.1 million. The agencies have aligned scholarship-giving criteria to assure student success. CVEP scholarship students persist at a higher rate than the local student population (91% vs. 83% for class of 2011).
- Established the five-year Regional Plan for College and Career Readiness with common targets, including 30% of high school students learning in career academies, increase in A-G course completion, accelerated math and English proficiency, 85% regional FAFSA completion rate, 10% increase in college going rate and a 10% increase in high school graduation rates.
- The region has linked its Innovation Hub/Accelerator program, a 2010 State of California initiative, focused on renewable energy and clean technology companies, to local career academy and pathway programs as a site for faculty externships and student visits with iHub business entrepreneur clients. The Coachella Valley's campus



is considered by the Governor's Go-Biz office to be the State's "best practice" Innovation Hub program.

These are only some of the improvements made in our region that would not have occurred without alignment of education, business and community goals.

The Governors Innovation Award provides a unique and compelling opportunity to transform the way our state's educational institutions collaborate to support student success. We hope you will consider our recommendations, and we are available to provide further information to assist your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Flavin', written in a cursive style.

Thomas Flavin
President & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rick Axelrod', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Rick Axelrod
Chairman, Board of Directors

Cc: CVEP Board of Directors